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Letter dated 13 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam in connection with the video-teleconference convened on Thursday, 9 July 2020 on peace consolidation in West Africa.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefings and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christoph **Heusgen**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas**

I am honoured to brief the Council today on the latest report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) (S/2020/585). This briefing is being held against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has, regrettably, led to a significant loss of life across the globe and is severely impacting our way of life and livelihoods. In that regard, I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences to all those who have lost loved ones and to wish a speedy recovery to those undergoing treatment while also enjoining everyone to stay safe and healthy.

Since my most recent briefing to the Council, in January (see S/PV.8698), attacks by violent extremists and intercommunal violence have continued to undermine peace and security in the region, particularly in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. Despite intense and sustained efforts by concerned countries, violent extremists have continued to attack security forces and civilians, with dire implications for the humanitarian and human rights situation in the region.

Terrorist attacks have been accompanied by the forced recruitment of children and abductions in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. In addition, school closures in the affected areas due to the extremely volatile security situation have denied thousands of children their right to education.

The fragile security situation has also caused an increase in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees in the region. In Burkina Faso, as of June, 921,000 people had been forced to flee their homes, an increase of 92 per cent compared to late 2019. In Mali, close to 240,000 people are internally displaced, of whom 54 per cent are women. In the Niger, as of June, 489,000 people had been forced to flee their homes. This includes internally displaced persons, Nigerian and Malian refugees.

In Nigeria, an estimated 7.7 million people will need emergency assistance in 2020. In Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states, more than 1.8 million people, more than half of them women, still live in makeshift camps or are hosted in communities that are themselves extremely vulnerable.

While national and multinational forces have intensified counter-terrorism operations, some communities have resorted to organized volunteer groups and self-defence militias for protection. Human rights groups have raised concerns over alleged abuses by self-defence militias and by security and defence forces.

The growing linkages between terrorism, organized crime and intercommunal violence cannot be overemphasized. Terrorists have continued to exploit latent ethnic animosities and the absence of the State in peripheral areas to advance their agenda. The United Nations must remain committed to working with all partners in order to enhance a more holistic and sustainable approach to these challenges by building national and institutional capacity; improving community resilience; and encouraging, supporting and advocating for good governance, political inclusion, respect for human rights and adherence to the rule of law.

In that regard, the United Nations should support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the implementation of its 2020-2024 action plan for the eradication of terrorism in the subregion. The international community also needs to increase its support for the full operationalization of the African Union-Lake Chad Basin Commission Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience

Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, while accelerating the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

Coordination among the various initiatives aimed at addressing security, humanitarian and development challenges in the region is crucial.

In that regard, the call by the Group of Five for the Sahel summit of 30 June for enhanced coordination and cohesion among Member States is commendable. I also welcome the commitment to the strict respect of human rights expressed at the summit. We are ready to work in partnership with Member States to address this challenge together.

As reiterated by the meeting of the steering committee of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, on 30 June, the United Nations should continue adopting a cross-pillar approach that emphasizes the importance of national ownership while also aiming to create synergies with other initiatives.

In that connection, on 4 March I facilitated a meeting between the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Head of the Multinational Joint Task Force, Ambassador Mamman Nuhu, and the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group, in Dakar, to develop a common understanding of the role of United Nations agencies in the implementation of the Lake Chad Basin Commission Regional Stabilization Strategy and to ensure coherence with existing regional programmes, including those implemented within the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

Furthermore, as part of our efforts to support the Mano River Union's cross-border security and confidence-building measures, in February UNOWAS signed a cooperation agreement with the Mano River Union on peace and security issues and support for youth and women on cross-border cooperation.

Climate change is reinforcing security risks in the region by exacerbating farmer-herder conflicts — which remain a major security concern — increasing social tensions and contributing to rural-urban migration, violence, delinquency and food insecurity. Through its convening role and in line with its new mandate, UNOWAS is conducting analysis and research to elicit a greater understanding and mitigation options on the adverse implications of climate change on peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel in collaboration with the relevant United Nations mechanisms and in partnership with ECOWAS, the World Bank and international, regional and national think tanks.

The COVID-19 pandemic is amplifying and exacerbating pre-existing conflict drivers, with grave implications for peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel. The pandemic is having a negative impact on human rights and the rule of law and is disproportionately affecting women and girls, including with respect to their role in informal trade and due to a reported increase in femicide, sexual and gender-based violence. Heavy-handed responses by some security services to enforce restrictions have been reported, even in countries with more solid human rights records.

We are also observing the impact of the pandemic on governance structures and systems; electoral and political dialogue processes, the humanitarian situation, the socioeconomic situation, and regional and multilateral engagements. Terrorists and violent extremist groups are also exploiting the situation to further launch attacks in the region, in disregard of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire.

Conscious of this, various countries of the subregion have developed national COVID-19 response plans with support from United Nations country teams. At the regional level, on 23 April the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held an extraordinary summit and appointed President Muhammadu

Buhari of Nigeria as Champion to lead regional COVID-19 response efforts. The Authority also established ministerial coordination committees on health, finance and transport to coordinate regional efforts to address the pandemic.

To promote a whole-of-United Nations approach in response to the pandemic, I have held virtual consultations with United Nations Resident Coordinators and their teams in all countries in the region to assess the impact of COVID-19 in each country, identify ways to strengthen United Nations collaboration with national and regional stakeholders in support of Governments' response efforts, and mobilize, where applicable, support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

The Resident Coordinators noted that while Governments' COVID-19 responses have largely been consensus-driven in most countries, there have also been situations where the response faced serious criticisms from national actors.

UNOWAS will continue to engage national authorities to ensure a holistic approach and work towards broadening social support, inclusivity and national cohesion. We will also continue our advocacy to ensure a human rights-based approach in the response by States in the region, with focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized segment of the population as well as on community involvement.

It is worth highlighting that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the region has witnessed a number of positive developments, including the relatively peaceful conduct of the presidential elections in Togo, local elections in Benin and the completion of the work of the Constitutional Review Commission in the Gambia.

Five high-stakes presidential elections are planned in the second half of the year in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and the Niger. These elections present an opportunity for democratic consolidation in those countries. However, to ensure that these processes are credible, transparent, inclusive and peaceful, consensus will be needed to address underlying challenges and any disruptions, including those linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting that the pandemic led to the suspension or postponement of preparations for the elections, including voter registration, in some of those countries. Preparations have, however, resumed, and stakeholders in the majority of those countries have maintained their determination to hold elections as scheduled.

I have held joint virtual consultations with the ECOWAS Commission President, Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, United Nations Resident Coordinators and heads of the election management bodies in countries preparing for elections to assess the situation on the ground, the level of preparation, the challenges faced and ways in which the United Nations could better support the various processes. The heads of the election management bodies all expressed confidence and provided assurances of their readiness to successfully organize the elections.

During those consultations, I insisted that the stakeholders ensure that solutions to challenges or disruptions caused by the pandemic are consensual, inclusive and respect human rights and the rule of law. I also insisted on the involvement of women, youth and persons living with disabilities in the entire electoral process in each country.

Ahead of the elections, which could be major flashpoints for crises, UNOWAS will continue to work with the relevant partners to support the efforts of the five countries in organizing inclusive, transparent and credible elections, which are crucial to the stability and development of the region.

I would like to recognize the unflinching support of the Council for the implementation of the mandate of UNOWAS while reiterating our commitment to continue accompanying national and regional actors to enhance peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel.

Annex II

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve

First of all, allow me to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Chambas, for his intervention. Belgium attaches great importance to the work of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) in favour of prevention, reconciliation, mediation, sustainable peace and the promotion of the rule of law in West Africa and the Sahel.

I would also like to thank Ms. Ibrahim for highlighting an important issue for West Africa and the Sahel.

The security situation in the region remains unstable. In Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso, the situation is deteriorating despite the many efforts made and growing international mobilization. In addition, parts of Nigeria also face constant terrorist attacks by Boko Haram as well as conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, which are also worrying phenomena and deserve special attention. Moreover, numerous local conflicts, sometimes of an intra- or intercommunal nature, are raging in the region. This deterioration has a direct impact on the humanitarian situation, causing suffering among hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. The coronavirus disease pandemic is dramatically exacerbating this already bleak picture, affecting even more strongly the most vulnerable, including women.

Large parts of Burkina Faso are now affected by violence. Recent actions have, hopefully, stopped further geographical spread. Belgium is concerned that terrorist attacks, which target not only the State but also civilians, infrastructure and places of worship, threaten not only Burkina Faso but also wider regional stability, with the risk of spreading to coastal countries, as with the attack on the border with Côte d'Ivoire on 11 June. Additionally, community relations are very strained and will take time and work to heal.

Across the region, Belgium salutes the courage and sacrifices of the defence and security forces in their fight against terrorists. However, they know that, in order to ultimately defeat terrorism, they have an obligation to set an example through their actions in respect of human rights. It is not weakening the security forces to make them investigate allegations and, if need be, go through a publicly announced criminal or disciplinary procedure. The opposite is true: while a perception of impunity already fuels terrorism, actively fighting impunity is the best way to regain the trust of citizens, gather more intelligence and lay the groundwork for reconciliation. Belgium is committed to continuing to support its partners in the region with that aim.

In addition, in line with the Secretary-General and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Belgium believes that the response to the challenges that arise in West Africa cannot be achieved solely through security-related action. A holistic approach is needed to deal with violent extremism that also emphasizes good governance, the fight against impunity, the strengthening of democratic institutions and addressing the grievances of marginalized groups, as well as sustainable and inclusive development.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to take tangible steps to halt the deterioration of the social fabric. Threats to pacific coexistence need to be resisted by fighting any attempt to divide on the basis of religion or community belonging.

Democratic institutions sometimes remain fragile in the region. The various upcoming elections later this year could test them even further. It is therefore paramount that voting occur on a level playing field and that the elections be free,

fair, transparent and peaceful. Belgium supports the efforts of UNOWAS to help in those elections and to consolidate democracy.^[P]_[SEP]In particular, the tensions in Guinea have already cost human lives recently, and it is important that there be renewed dialogue and compromise in order to achieve appeased elections. In Burkina Faso and the Niger, the challenge will be to ensure that elections are held all across the country. Finally, in Côte d'Ivoire, where we expect that 2020 will confirm the return to peace and stability, we call on all political actors to rise to the occasion, as the country's situation also impacts regional stability. Moreover, post-electoral tensions in Mali need to be addressed swiftly, in line with the recommendations of ECOWAS, to avoid a further deterioration of the political situation in the country.

More broadly, we support the efforts of UNOWAS and the United Nations country teams to promote national reconciliation, post-conflict reconstruction and security sector reform. In various States, the political will to anchor good governance, democracy and human rights will be decisive in consolidating gains and embarking on the path of sustainable development.

UNOWAS also plays a leading role in studying the impact of climate change on security within the framework of a conflict-prevention approach. This is vital work, as Ms. Ibrahim explained, and I encourage the Special Representative to continue that effort.

In conclusion, I would also like to underline the essential role played by regional and subregional organizations. I commend their close coordination with UNOWAS and encourage them to maintain it in future.

Annex III

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang

I thank Special Representative Chambas and Ms. Ibrahim for their briefings.

Since the last briefing on this issue (see S/PV.8698), the overall situation in West Africa and the Sahel has remained stable. Presidential and legislative elections were held successfully in Togo and Mali, and constitutional review has progressed in the Gambia. However, grave security challenges remain. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has added another layer of complexity to the regional situation and is undermining the region's economic and social development.

Over the past few months, through its good offices and mediation efforts, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) has played an important role in promoting peace and stability in the region. China appreciates its efforts and contributions under the leadership of the Special Representative, especially during the difficult context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 continues to spread in the region. The priority for UNOWAS is to closely monitor the evolving pandemic situation, assess its impact and help the countries of the region raise awareness, increase preparedness, strengthen and promote health care, save lives and mitigate the impact of the outbreak.

In view of the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2020/585) and the situation on the ground, I would like to share a few more points.

First, we should encourage the countries of the region to settle their differences through dialogue. Many such countries, including Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and the Niger, all have important elections later this year. We have seen tensions rising in some countries, and electoral preparations are also affected by the pandemic.

To create a favourable external environment, the international community needs to encourage relevant parties to enhance mutual trust and resolve differences peacefully through dialogue and consultation. China supports the continued good offices and mediation efforts of UNOWAS to help ensure peaceful, credible and transparent elections in those countries on the basis of full respect for their national ownership.

Secondly, we should help the countries of the region eliminate the root causes of instability through development. Underdevelopment is the root cause of many regional challenges and threats. The international community needs to further promote the region's socioeconomic development, especially by increasing investment in agriculture, health, education, employment and infrastructure.

We encourage UNOWAS to strengthen coordination with other United Nations agencies and regional and subregional organizations, and to enhance synergies by aligning international and regional development initiatives with the national strategies of the countries of the region.

Thirdly, we should increase support to the countries of the region to combat security challenges. Boko Haram terrorism, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and intercommunal violence seriously undermine the security and stability of the region. We call on all parties to conflicts to heed the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire.

China commends the important role played by the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). More support

is needed to build the capacities of the countries of the region to more effectively combat terrorism and transnational organized crime. The international community should provide more humanitarian assistance to the region and ensure its timely delivery to the most vulnerable groups.

As a good friend and a good partner, China is a strong supporter of peace and stability in the region. We are committed to helping the region eliminate poverty, improving people's well-being and promoting development. We support a number of peace and security programmes in the region through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund. We also contributed ¥300 million in aid for counter-terrorism operations in the Sahel and the G-5 Sahel Force.

Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has been providing assistance to Africa. We have delivered medical supplies to more than 50 African countries, including countries of the region, and have sent medical teams to Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. China will follow through on the commitments made by President Xi Jinping at the China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19, held last month. We will start, ahead of schedule, the construction of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters later this year. We will also accelerate the construction of China-Africa Friendship Hospitals and pair Chinese hospitals with 30 African hospitals in order to help African countries improve their capacity for disease prevention and control.

Finally, China will continue to support the work of the Special Representative and UNOWAS. We will work with UNOWAS and the international community to help the countries of the region combat COVID-19, maintain peace and stability and achieve sustainable development.

Annex IV

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations

Allow me to start by thanking Mr. Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his excellent briefing, and Ms. Ibrahim for her interesting and key perspective presented to us this morning.

The Dominican Republic welcomes the recent positive trends and relatively peaceful elections that took place in the subregion during this period. However, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has been disruptive to certain vital efforts in the subregion. We hope that all the activities put on hold due to the health situation can be resumed as soon as possible, including the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission.

Likewise, it is important that the various pre-election proceedings, such as voter registration processes and agreed constitutional referendums across the subregion, can be completed and that the upcoming presidential elections in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and the Niger can take place in an inclusive, safe and peaceful political climate.

The Dominican Republic is concerned with the impact of the pandemic in West Africa and the Sahel, given its implications on peace and security. We worry that the pandemic will very likely exacerbate the current human security crisis, especially in the Sahel region, due to the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe and the combination of poverty, climate change, underdevelopment and conflict.

In addition, according to estimates of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the economic effects will even adversely impact the growth rate of Nigeria, the subregion's biggest economy, which could decline from an initial projection of 2.9 per cent to -3.4 per cent in 2020 — a worrisome trend for the whole region and directly linked to the effects of the pandemic.

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the subregion is also facing an unprecedented humanitarian situation, with 24 million Sahelians in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. That situation, in turn, is worsening due to poor health-care systems, food insecurity, violations of human rights, a lack of development and the persistence of conflict and insecurity, all of which is leading to mass displacement. This precarious situation will likely be the trigger for confrontations to obtain scarce resources.

The Dominican Republic supports calls for an urgent, coordinated and united global response to meet the global challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and launches an appeal for international cooperation to help West Africa and the Sahel mitigate the effects of the pandemic and reactivate the economies of the countries of the region.

With regard to the security situation, we condemn the attacks on civilians carried out by violent extremists and remain concerned about the increased intercommunal violence. Those developments create a vicious cycle that destroys the lives of innocent civilians, including women and children, and closes the doors of development for future generations who lack opportunities, including access to education.

We support the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in its efforts to strengthen national security sector reform, and we applaud the revised tripartite agreement between the United Nations, the European Union and the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), signed in February at the

Summit of the Heads of State of G-5 Sahel. The agreement reiterated the need for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to provide logistical support to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, and took important steps to ensure a more coordinated approach in addressing threats to stability and security in West Africa.

In addition to the current health challenges of COVID-19, we must continually analyse and address the emergence other factors of instability in order to identify their root causes and take action to counter them. That can be achieved — if there is political will among the leaders of the subregion — through strengthening and harmonizing the implementation of regional strategies to prevent and resolve such challenges in order to ensure a more promising future for the subregion and its people.

In conclusion, we would like to commend Special Representative Chambas, his team and the respective regional organizations for all their efforts to sustain peace in West Africa and the Sahel under these unprecedented circumstances.

Annex V**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank the briefers for their comprehensive reports on the developments in the region. I would also like to reiterate Estonia's full support for the work of Special Representative Chambas and the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) over the past six months.

It is with great concern that we follow the overall deterioration in the security situation in West Africa and the Sahel. The growing number of terrorist attacks and the increase in intercommunal violence — most notably in Burkina Faso, but also in Central Mali and in the Liptako-Gourma triborder area — are especially complex. We welcome that those transnational threats are being addressed through multinational efforts such as the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which, together with the French-led Operation Barkhane, have conducted successful counter-terrorist operations. Estonia has been actively participating in the joint efforts and will continue to do so.

The key to long-lasting stability in the region is full political ownership by the region's States. An effective State presence — that is, State institutions, services and an adequately trained military presence — is of the utmost importance. An integral part of that State presence is the fight against impunity. We urge all countries of the region to strengthen the relevant dispute-settlement mechanisms and effectively address all grave violations and abuses of human rights. All perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable regardless of their status.

We remain very concerned about the increasingly dire humanitarian situation in some areas of West Africa and the Sahel. The coronavirus disease pandemic has added yet another layer to an already complicated situation. It is therefore especially important that humanitarian aid reach all those in need.

Understanding long-term grievances and addressing the root causes of the conflict need to remain at the core of national and international efforts. We commend UNOWAS and the Economic Community of West African States for addressing the impact of climate change on security in the region, and we encourage them to continue to do so. Moreover, ensuring the full and meaningful participation of women and youth in the political process will bring the region closer to long-lasting stability. We urge all parties to take further steps in that regard.

Finally, it is key that the upcoming elections in the second half of the year in several countries of West Africa and the Sahel be held as planned. We urge all parties to make every effort to ensure that they are inclusive, transparent, credible and peaceful.

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

Allow me to start by expressing France's deepest condolences to Côte d'Ivoire on the passing away of its Prime Minister, Amadou Gon Coulibaly. As Côte d'Ivoire is currently entering an electoral period that is paramount for the country's future, France pays tribute to this great servant of the Ivorian people.

France commends the Special Representative and the team of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for their ongoing efforts in recent months, despite the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic is already having serious consequences in West Africa and the Sahel. We must therefore redouble our efforts to support the countries of the region as they face multiple challenges — whether related to security, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, humanitarian consequences, economic development or climate change and its impact on the peace and stability of States.

The security situation in the area remains fragile, mainly in the Sahel. The Nouakchott summit of 30 June allowed us to take stock of the situation and the shared commitments made in Pau. All the countries of the region and their partners reaffirmed their determination to combat terrorism and intensify efforts to achieve lasting stabilization in the region. In the three-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, terrorist groups are continuing their activities, forcing thousands of people to flee the violence. Nevertheless, military operations launched in March by France and the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel have produced results, weakening and disrupting terrorist groups — whether the Islamic State in Greater Sahara or armed groups affiliates of Al-Qaida. In that connection, I note the neutralization, on 3 June, of the leader of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Abdelmalek Droukdel.

We also note progress in regional State development and redeployment, and have supported such efforts alongside our partners, particularly those in the European Union. France welcomes announcements made by the Sahelian authorities with regard to the opening of investigations into allegations of human rights violations, in particular those concerning certain members of their armies, and calls for those responsible to be identified and brought to justice.

On the political front, the current year is decisive for the consolidation of democratic processes. In that regard, I refer in particular to Guinea and Burkina Faso. In Guinea, the 22 March legislative elections and referendum were fraught with tension. Distrust among political actors remains strong. Comprehensive dialogue is critical. The presidential election in October will be crucial for the continuation of the political process in the country, and it is important that it be conducted in a transparent, credible and inclusive manner.

In Burkina Faso, we are concerned about the prevailing insecurity in the north and the east, which could hinder the successful holding of the 22 November elections. We encourage the authorities to strengthen the State's presence in these outlying areas, with a view to restoring basic services and easing tensions. It is important to consolidate the gains made in this country, which successfully completed its democratic transition five years ago. France supports the role of the Economic Community of West African States and the International Organization of La Francophonie in supporting political processes in the region.

Lastly, the situation in the Lake Chad basin must be closely monitored. France welcomes the successes achieved by Chadian troops against terrorist groups. We

encourage Nigeria, whose role is essential, to capitalize on these successes in order to build up its military effort against Boko Haram. Only the restoration of security will make it possible to redeploy basic services, restart the economy and carry out long-term development actions. It is also essential that the actions of humanitarian actors and international humanitarian law be respected.

Annex VII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Juergen Schulz**

I would like to start by commending the work of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mohamed Ibn Chambas. Mr. Chambas's cooperation is a prime example of the holistic approach needed for the stability of the entire region. We expressly welcome the good offices of the Special Representative and the continuous support for inclusive dialogue. Dialogue is indeed essential, especially in the light of upcoming elections in the region.

Both the regional office and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General enjoy full German support. We greatly appreciate the Secretary-General's comprehensive report (S/2020/585) and all of its recommendations, particularly on the climate-security nexus. We look forward to the UNOWAS study on the security implications of climate change.

We also thank Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim for her passionate briefing. Through her plea for the many concrete things that she spoke of, she made very tangible for us what we in the Security Council often discuss in more abstract terms. We thank her for that.

In reviewing the report of the Secretary-General and hearing the statements made today, I would like to address four issues.

First of all, on climate and security, today's briefings made clear again what United Nations institutions have documented time and again, namely, the considerable impact of climate change on security and stability in West Africa and the Sahel. The effects of climate change have caused an increased number of conflicts and are exacerbating existing ones between herders and farmers. In addition, the effects of climate change are leading to disputes over scarce resources and contributing to increased food insecurity in the region. All of this creates a breeding ground for violence, violent extremism and terrorism, and is often the starting point for people to migrate to other regions. For this reason, it was vital to include the climate-security nexus in the UNOWAS mandate at the beginning of this year. We feel this is absolutely crucial, and we cannot ignore the reality any longer.

Secondly, much was also said today on women and peace and security. Gender inequality is obviously prevalent. Women and girls continue to be the main target of sexual and gender-based violence. We therefore commend the integration of the gender dimension in the work of UNOWAS. We welcome efforts to increase women's meaningful participation in political and security processes. Much more needs to be done; although gender equality is not a goal unto itself, the full, effective and equal participation of women substantially increases the chances for sustainable peace and stability in the region.

Thirdly, with regard to regional cooperation, all of the challenges the region faces can be overcome only through regional cooperation. Many previous speakers alluded to this fact. UNOWAS is successfully collaborating with regional partners, and coordination with such other United Nations entities as the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, respective country offices, United Nations agencies and the Peacebuilding Commission remains important. Germany commends existing regional cooperation, including the engagement of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the work of the Economic Community of West African States. At the same time, any international engagement must go hand in hand with the principles of national ownership. It is the primary responsibility of Governments to build trust in

State institutions, ensure the rule of law, guarantee respect for human rights, engage with civil society and integrate women and youth.

In this context, it is encouraging to learn about such positive developments as the further progress made in the Gambia. However, we remain concerned about tensions and violence in the context of electoral processes in Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, for example. We remain deeply worried about the deteriorating security situation in West Africa and the Sahel, in particular in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Lake Chad basin. An increase in terrorist activities and organized crime, intercommunal violence, continued political tensions, human rights violations and abuses and the exacerbated humanitarian crises are alarming and often mutually reinforcing.

Before concluding, I would like to say a final word on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The ongoing COVID-19 crisis and its humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences are aggravating the already challenging situation in the region. The call for a global ceasefire by the Secretary-General, which the Security Council endorsed in resolution 2532 (2020) last week, has an essential, literally vital, importance for West Africa and the Sahel. Germany commends the efforts of many Governments to contain the spread of the pandemic. At the same time, we urge all actors to fully respect human rights. Preserving the freedom of opinion and expression as well as access to information remains even more important in these difficult times.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Muhsin Syihab

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mohamed Ibn Chambas and Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, for their comprehensive briefings. I would also like to commend the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel for the work it has been doing in the region.

Today's meeting takes place in a very challenging context in West Africa and the Sahel: the volatile security environment, the worsening humanitarian situation and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Against this backdrop, I would like to highlight three points.

First, we welcome progress in the region on several fronts, including the holding of elections as well as other forms of progress in political process in several countries, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/585), despite the added challenges posed by restrictive measures resulting from COVID-19. We note that concrete steps are being taken to increase the participation of women in the political sphere. We commend the efforts of all stakeholders in the region to ensure the consolidation of democracy, peace and security, and sustainable development. We view that it is necessary to continue building the capacity of national Governments and regional organizations in this regard.

Secondly, the security situation in the region is still a cause for concern. The number of occurrences of complex attacks against civilians and security forces remains high. This has devastating humanitarian impacts, particularly when the region is facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are also deeply concerned by the increasing intercommunity violence in the region. We believe that it is crucial to strengthen community-based dispute resolution mechanisms and to continue to pursue stabilization efforts to defuse tensions and dismantle militias.

We commend the resolve of the Governments of the region to combat cross-border and cross-cutting security challenges, including through the Group of Five for the Sahel and its Joint Force, as well as the Multinational Joint Task Force. We believe that it is necessary to continue supporting countries in the region in their efforts to address terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime. We also underline the points raised by Special Representative Chambas on the importance of supporting the Economic Community of West African States in implementing its 2020-2024 action plan on the eradication of terrorism.

Thirdly, it is important that the dire humanitarian situation be alleviated. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the region was already suffering from an acute humanitarian crisis, with a high level of displacement and food insecurity. Growing instability and the COVID-19 pandemic will further drive up the numbers of people requiring humanitarian support. We call on all international partners to provide the much-needed funding to provide life-saving assistance to the people. It is also crucial to facilitate and maintain unimpeded humanitarian assistance and relief, including to hard-to-reach areas.

In conclusion, the many challenges faced by countries in West Africa and the Sahel require concerted and comprehensive efforts that encompass security, humanitarian, human rights and development aspects. We share the belief that climate change is exacerbating the security risk, as the Special Representative mentioned, and that it is affecting the humanitarian situation in the region. We fully

subscribe to the Secretary-General's view that it is important to redouble efforts aimed at addressing root causes, enhancing investment in human development and promoting social cohesion. International partners should continue to support the national and regional efforts being made to ensure long-term peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the three African States members of the Security Council, namely, the Niger, Tunisia and South Africa, as well as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (A3+1).

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, for his insightful briefing and for his dedication to promoting dialogue and for his sustained commitment to stabilizing the situation in the region. I also commend Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, whose relevant remarks testify to her commitment to raising awareness on the adverse effects of climate change, particularly in a region already facing several challenges.

The year 2020 is a one in which several elections were held under normal conditions, despite the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Some of those elections, such as in Mali, led to the emergence of women as a political force, many of whom were elected to the National Assembly. The A3+1 welcomes this trend, which strengthens the basis for democracy and the rule of law, and which in turn lays the foundations for a more consensual and peaceful management of power.

We commend the key role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his effective efforts aimed at advocating preventive diplomacy through his good offices, without which many crisis situations could have degenerated. In this regard, the strengthening of democratic institutions through the promotion of dialogue among political actors and advocacy in promoting peace and peaceful coexistence among segments of society and communities are actions to the credit of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). We encourage UNOWAS to continue with these efforts, especially as the subregion prepares for the general elections that are scheduled to take place in five countries, some of them in tense environments. Through good cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance is essential, UNOWAS must help ensure that all these planned elections take place in a calm and stable environment, especially in view of the difficult security context and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to its traditional mandate, UNOWAS will need to devote even more efforts to helping countries deal with what has now become the top priority, namely, the fight against armed terrorist groups, whose actions spare neither the armed forces nor the civilian populations of the countries where they seek to operate. These terrorist groups, which fuel intercommunal tensions, are forcing thousands of people, mostly women and children, to flee their homes.

In the Sahel, a region where climate change, armed conflict and fragile health systems compound the challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating an already disastrous situation that has made populations particularly vulnerable to disease and hunger and further risks, reversing the hard-earned progress made on many fronts, including economic growth, poverty reduction and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. According to United Nations agencies, 3.5 million people are expected to face acute to severe food insecurity, and 3.1 million are internally displaced persons, returnees and people at risk of statelessness. We commend the initiatives taken by ECOWAS to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

Faced with such a situation, the A3+1 believes that only a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of terrorism and intercommunal violence

through poverty alleviation and investment in human development is the most appropriate strategy to reverse this most worrisome trend. We also believe that a strong emphasis on more community-level interventions, such as intercommunal dialogues to address intercommunal violence, are vital. We therefore welcome the convening and the outcomes of the workshop on good practices to prevent and resolve farmer-herder conflicts, co-organized by UNOWAS and ECOWAS, which we believe was a positive initiative for addressing intercommunal violence.^[SEP]In this regard, the A3+1 commend the action taken by some countries to strengthen the participation of women and young people in the implementation of national strategies for peace, security, development and the fight against COVID-19. These positive developments will contribute significantly to the broader national ownership of, and meaningful participation by, all populations in peacebuilding activities in their respective countries.

The A3+1 remain deeply concerned at the persistent challenges of drug trafficking, organized crime and maritime piracy, through which terrorist groups find the means to finance their criminal activities. In that regard, we commend the excellent work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in strengthening the interception capacities of States in the region, which has led to significant drug seizures in Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali, as well as to the arrest and conviction of those involved in such crimes.

In addition to the above-mentioned pressing challenges, the A3+1 believe that UNOWAS should, through its coordination role, assist the countries of the subregion in addressing the cumulative effects of insecurity, the impact of climate change and the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. It should support the measures taken by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government who have already put in place a response plan for the pandemic, taking into account the fight against the spread of the disease and the post-pandemic economic recovery.

We welcome the collaboration efforts among ECOWAS, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the African Union towards realizing the deployment of 3,000 troops of the African Standby Force to the Sahel to further combat terrorism. It is time to redouble efforts to combat insecurity and stabilize the subregion at the military level, through the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the G5-Sahel forces, the Multinational Joint Task Force and the forces of partner States. We hope that this will be accompanied by substantial funding that could enable the implementation of development actions for the benefit of the peoples of the subregion. The multiple strategies for the Sahel and other development plans should cease to be mere slogans and become real levers for the mobilization of financial resources, which West Africa and its member States so badly need.

We hope that the international community will fulfil its commitments to support the region in extricating itself from the current situation, including by disbursing pledges made to the region, as substantial funding is needed to enable the implementation of development actions for the benefit of the peoples of this vast area.

Annex X**Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, and the Coordinator of the Association for Indigenous Peul Women and Peoples of Chad, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, for their briefings.

We share the concerns expressed by Mr. Chambas regarding the further deterioration of the security situation in West Africa, especially in the Sahel. The geography of terrorist activity, inter-ethnic and intercommunal conflict, drug trafficking and organized crime is expanding in the region. Extremist ideology is attracting new adherents. Almost every week, we receive reports of the tragic loss of life caused by heinous terrorist activities. Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger have literally become front-line States. We are concerned that the Boko Haram terrorist group has become more active in the Lake Chad basin. We reaffirm our full support to all those who are engaged in a difficult struggle against terrorism in the region.

A new and extremely dangerous factor for security and stability in West Africa is the coronavirus pandemic. The disease hits indiscriminately, in both stable and the most vulnerable countries. Social services and schools cease to function and health-care facilities are under tremendous strain. Only those who are interested in further destabilization of the region — terrorists and other disruptive elements — capitalize on this disturbing situation. The consequences of coronavirus for West African countries have yet to be assessed, but it is already clear that more and more people will need humanitarian assistance and other forms of support.

Despite a number of problems, the developments in the political life of the countries of the region show that, even in the present difficult circumstances associated with the pandemic, the African States and public institutions have managed to cope successfully with their tasks. In this regard, we hope that parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for the second half of 2020 in many countries of the region will be held democratically, transparently and legitimately and with strict respect for national sovereignty, as was the case during the period covered in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/585). Interference in those processes by external players also should be excluded.

The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) faces large-scale, difficult tasks: promote the resolution of regional crises, participate in political mediation, help to strengthen State institutions, implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and coordinate other United Nations presences on the ground. In addition, the efficient functioning of the Office directly depends on how well it coordinates with regional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Some issues, including combating piracy and the demarcation of the Cameroon-Nigeria border, require close cooperation between UNOWAS and its southern neighbour, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

To conclude, I would like to highlight that Russia welcomes Mr. Chambas' personal commitment and efforts to help countries in West Africa, the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin to overcome current difficulties. There is no doubt that UNOWAS deserves credit for important achievements in the region.

Annex XI**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

We are grateful, as ever, to Mr. Chambas for his report on the situation and for the activity of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel during the first six months of its new three-year mandate.

It is clear from Mr. Chambas' briefing that coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has added a further layer of complexity to an already difficult situation, and the United Kingdom appreciates that he is having to adjust in the face of this new dynamic.

I am also very grateful to Ms. Ibrahim for transposing the analysis we read in the reports into a real human story. She brought into stark relief the challenges of climate change for societies in the region and the need for good governance, as well as development and security. There is also, as she put it, the need for a green deal. Those are issues that the United Kingdom cares about as the forthcoming host of the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the "rebuilding better" strand of our financing for development work.

We know that the confluence of negative factors in the Sahel presents a unique and complex challenge: chronic underdevelopment, extreme poverty, marginalization, insecurity, governance vacuums easily filled by malevolent actors, and competition over resources exacerbated — again, as Ms. Ibrahim said — by climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating those issues, but it did not create them, and it remains critical that we sustain efforts to address the underlying drivers of poverty and instability in the region.

The United Kingdom is deeply troubled by the deteriorating humanitarian situation outlined by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas. With more than 15 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and more than 3 million displaced in the Sahel alone, it is critical that our response be able to reach those most in need. In this context, we urge all parties to ensure unhindered humanitarian access and movement in order to allow the delivery of essential goods and services. Without this, food insecurity and protection needs will continue to rise. That is particularly the case for women and girls, who are facing increased exposure to gender-based violence and other human rights abuses.

The United Kingdom shares others' concerns about the deteriorating security situation, particularly in Mali and Burkina Faso. We call on all parties to respect human rights law and international humanitarian law. In that respect, we should be mindful of the tragic consequences of violations, both on a human level and as a driver of further violence. We call on all the Governments of the Group of Five for the Sahel to undertake fair and transparent investigations into alleged violations by State security forces and to hold those responsible to account.

The rise in extremist and terrorist violence in the Lake Chad basin, including the recent targeting of a United Nations humanitarian facility, is also deeply troubling. Such attacks threaten to increase displacement and the number of people in camps for internally displaced persons further still.

With presidential elections fast approaching in a number of countries, it has never been more important to prioritize prevention and preserve stability. The United Kingdom is particularly alarmed by violence in Guinea in recent months and by the prospect of seeing more as we approach those elections. Preventing backsliding on

governance, accountability, access to justice and human rights is critical to ensure environments conducive to free, fair, timely and credible elections. So it is our sincere hope that, as Mr. Chambas said, 2020 will be defined by democratic consolidation and credible, inclusive and peaceful elections and that where those who are required by those elections to leave power ensure a smooth transition of power.

Returning to the global coronavirus pandemic, the United Kingdom is clear-eyed about the challenges faced by vulnerable countries across West Africa and the Sahel and is working hard to support those most in need. We are committed to a global response. Last month, the United Kingdom hosted the Global Vaccine Summit, raising \$8.8 billion to support the immunization of 300 million children. We have announced a total of almost \$1 billion for the COVID-19 response, including \$20 million for the African Union's response fund. Of course, the international response to COVID-19 should not divert vital resources from other critical work that seeks to tackle the underlying drivers of poverty and instability, so we were grateful to hear that United Nations-wide coordination with regard to the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel has improved. It is essential that the entire United Nations system, including critical development entities, such as the United Nations Development Programme, mobilize in support of peacebuilding efforts in the region.

Mr. Chambas and the United Nations system across his area of responsibility have an incredibly difficult job in a region with a complex nexus of challenges. We thank him for all that he and the United Nations operations across the region are doing to tackle those challenges. It is critical for the people of the region that we succeed.

Annex XII**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Cherith Norman-Chalet**

It is good to see you, Mr. President, and it is always good to hear from Special Representative of the Secretary-General Chambas about his work.

West Africa, as colleagues have already noted today, faces a number of challenges, but the new threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has brought its own negative political and economic effects. Therefore, we welcome Mr. Chambas' briefing today on how the impact of the crisis is evolving. We very much thank Ms. Ibrahim for her passionate description of the challenges facing her country and the region as a whole.

With growing instability and the COVID-19 crisis, 2020 has proven and is showing to be a critical year for the future of West Africa and the Sahel. West Africa will see five presidential elections between October and December, including in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana and the Niger. We look to the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel to play a constructive role in encouraging those elections to be free, fair and transparent.

Countries in West Africa and the Sahel are also grappling with significant threats to peace, security and stability owing to the confluence of internal political tensions, the COVID-19 pandemic, violence by armed groups and a worsening food security and humanitarian situation. The United States has long engaged with countries in the region to strengthen health systems to respond to this type of disease outbreak — and our steadfast support will continue. The Trump Administration has allocated more than \$12 billion to benefit the global response to COVID-19, including vaccine and therapeutics development, preparedness efforts and humanitarian assistance. This is in addition to more than \$170 billion in United States investments in global health and humanitarian assistance throughout the last decade.

We are concerned, though, about increasing instability across the Sahel, specifically in parts of Nigeria. We strongly condemn the horrific violence — by terrorists and criminal groups alike — that has taken so many lives. We support the efforts of the countries involved to counter violent extremist groups and continue to stress the need to protect civilians and instil citizen confidence in regional security forces and Governments. States undermine their own credibility when authorities, especially security forces, violate or abuse human rights. We call on regional Governments to strengthen State institutions and provide good governance to their citizens to improve stability in the Sahel.

We also share Special Representative Chambas' concern about violence spreading further across the region. The United States is taking policy and programmatic steps to address violence emanating from the Sahel into coastal West Africa, especially since the 10 June attack in northern Côte d'Ivoire and the 2019 kidnapping for ransom in northern Benin.

In Mali, we are monitoring the recent demonstrations, where protestors are calling for President Keita's resignation. We call on all actors to engage in dialogue and restraint and reaffirm the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, including for the purposes of peaceful protest. We support the high-level delegation of the Economic Community of West African States, sent to find a sustainable solution to the unrest, including concerns over National Assembly seats, where the initial outcome was overturned by the Constitutional Court. We continue to oppose any efforts towards an extra-constitutional change of Government in Mali. We further trust that Council

members will join us in urging the signatory parties of the Algiers accord to meet the implementation benchmarks in the recently renewed mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. That would substantially bolster efforts to stabilize Mali and the broader Sahel.

Annex XIII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, for his comprehensive briefing. I also thank Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, for her contribution.

We are encouraged to see the elections were conducted peacefully in Mali, Guinea and Togo. However, preparations for elections in some countries have stalemated. Political discord among parties continues to make national dialogue and reconciliation in various countries more difficult.

We remain very concerned about recurrent terrorist attacks against civilians and defence and security forces in the region, particularly in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. We join the Secretary-General and other Member States in condemning the multiple terrorist attacks on 9, 10 and 13 June against civilians and a United Nations humanitarian facility in Nigeria.

Moreover, the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and violation of human rights in the region are also our concerns. As reported, in 2020, 24 million Sahelians will be in need of humanitarian assistance. Across West Africa and the Sahel, 19.1 million people are projected to be in food insecurity during the lean season, from June to August — a 77 per cent increase compared with 2019, the highest number in a decade. Furthermore, the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic puts West Africa and the Sahel region at risk of further instability and insecurity.

We also are concerned about the fact that drug smuggling and trafficking in West Africa are on the rise. The recent seizures of 120 kilograms of cocaine in Senegal and 405 kilograms of cocaine in Côte d'Ivoire show that more attention should be paid to the problem. Against this background, my delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, we call on the relevant political stakeholders and actors in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea to work together and reach consensus so that the upcoming elections can take place inclusively, transparently, credibly and peacefully.

Secondly, we call on all concerned parties to further cooperate on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism across West Africa and the Sahel. We welcome the recent Security Council press statements on terrorism acts in Mali (SC/14213) and Nigeria (SC/14216) and on the Group of Five for the Sahel (SC/14211). We also join the Secretary-General in welcoming the adoption of the 2020-2024 action plan for the eradication of terrorism by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 21 December 2019.

Thirdly, we join other Member States in supporting the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge the Governments and other relevant parties in the region to uphold their obligations and responsibilities to implement international humanitarian law and ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those who most need it without hindrance.

Fourthly, we call for a coherent and integrated approach to the security, humanitarian and development challenges and climate change. We support every initiative and effort to enhance regional and international cooperation and partnerships to promote greater socioeconomic development, to prevent and resolve farmer-herder conflicts and to tackle their root causes. We stress the importance

of the full, equal and meaningful participation and involvement of women in the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and development.

Last but not least, we commend the tireless efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the African Union, ECOWAS and the Coalition for the Sahel's joint command mechanism.

We reiterate our commitments to working closely with the United Nations, the members of the Security Council and international and regional partners so as to address the combined threats of terrorism and organized crime to international peace and security and build sustained peace, security and development for the region.
